What is Claimed is:

1. A method of optimizing data streaming in a peer-to-peer architecture including a plurality of clients in a chain, the method comprising:

each client monitoring its own bandwidth;

each client informing a succeeding client in the chain of that bandwidth;
each client comparing its own bandwidth with the bandwidth of a preceding
client in the chain; and

each client, in response to a difference between the compared bandwidths, reordering its position among the clients in the chain.

- 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein each client identifies a preceding client in the chain to the succeeding client in the chain.
- 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein a detecting client detects that its bandwidth is greater than that of the preceding client in the chain and, in response, opens a connection with a client upstream of the preceding client.
- 4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the detecting client identifies a succeeding client in the chain to the preceding client in the chain.
- 5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the preceding client opens a connection with the identified succeeding client.
- 6. The method of Claim 3, wherein the or each of the connections is opened concurrently with pre-existing connections between clients in the chain.
- 7. The method of Claim 3, wherein after the or each concurrent connection has been made to a client, the or each associated pre-existing connection to that client is dropped.

- 8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the client switches to reading local buffer memory before the pre-existing connection is dropped.
- 9. The method of Claim 5, wherein, in the reordered chain, the detecting client receives streamed data via the connection from the client that was upstream of the preceding client.
- 10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the detecting client sends streamed data to the preceding client.
- 11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the pre-existing connection between the preceding client and the detecting client is reversed.
- 12. The method of Claim 11, wherein a replacement connection is opened between the preceding client and the detecting client.
- 13. The method of Claim 9, wherein, in the reordered chain, the succeeding client receives streamed data via the connection from the preceding client.
- 14. The method of Claim 1, wherein after the chain has been reordered, a client synchronizes a timecode of data in local buffer memory with a timecode of data received from a new streamed data input source before switching to data received from that source.
- 15. The method of Claim 1, wherein a client replenishes its local buffer memory after the chain has been reordered.
 - 16. A peer-to-peer data streaming system comprising:
- a plurality of clients in a chain, each client including bandwidth-monitoring means for monitoring its own bandwidth, communication means for informing a succeeding

client in the chain of that bandwidth, comparison means for comparing its own bandwidth with the bandwidth of a preceding client in the chain, and reconfiguration means responsive to a difference between the compared bandwidths to reorder its position among the clients in the chain.

- 17. The system of Claim 16, wherein a client includes address-providing means for receiving and storing the address of a preceding or succeeding client in the chain and providing that address to, respectively, the succeeding or preceding client in the chain.
- 18. The system of Claim 16, wherein the comparison means of a client is associated with connection means for receiving the address of, and opening a connection with, a client upstream of the preceding client if the comparison means detects that the bandwidth of its associated client is greater than that of the preceding client in the chain.
- 19. The system of Claim 18, wherein the connection means is capable of opening a connection concurrently with a pre-existing connection between clients in the chain.
- 20. The system of Claim 19, wherein the connection means is responsive to making the concurrent connection to drop the associated pre-existing connection.
- 21. The system of Claim 20, wherein the connection means is associated with switch means for switching the client to read local buffer memory before the pre-existing connection is dropped.
- 22. The system of Claim 18, wherein the connection means is capable of reversing a pre-existing connection between clients in the chain.

- 23. The system of Claim 16, wherein a client comprises data synchronizing means for synchronizing a timecode of data in local buffer memory with a timecode of data received from a new streamed data input source.
- 24. The system of Claim 23, wherein a client comprises switch means responsive to the data synchronizing means to switch to data received from the new streamed data input source when the timecodes are synchronized.
- 25. A client terminal for use in a peer-to-peer data streaming system having a plurality of client terminals in a chain, the client terminal being configured or programmed to include bandwidth-monitoring means for monitoring its own bandwidth, communication means for informing a succeeding client terminal in the chain of that bandwidth, comparison means for comparing its own bandwidth with the bandwidth of a preceding client terminal in the chain, and reconfiguration means responsive to a difference between compared bandwidths to reorder its position among the client terminals in the chain.
- 26. A program storage medium readable by a computer having a memory, the medium tangibly embodying one or more programs of instructions executable by the computer to perform method steps for configuring or programming a client terminal for use in a peer-to-peer data streaming system having a plurality of client terminals in a chain, the method steps comprising the steps of:

configuring or programming the client terminal to monitor its own bandwidth;

configuring or programming the client terminal to inform a succeeding client terminal in the chain of that bandwidth;

configuring or programming the client terminal to compare its own bandwidth with the bandwidth of a preceding client terminal in the chain; and

configuring or programming the client terminal to reorder its position among the client terminals in the chain based upon a difference between compared bandwidths.